

From: Robert Maxwell Case
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 6:32pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sirs:

I'm a software developer with a cutting edge product that I fear could be "embraced and extended" by Microsoft along the lines of the Netscape scenario.

I was a user of the Mosaic browser and switched to Netscape as soon as it was released. Although I never paid the \$39 price for the "stable" version, I was fully prepared to do so as it was so much better.

I also had communication with the Mosaic browser development team prior to Microsoft's licensing of their technology. I was online the day Microsoft announced that Internet Explorer (Mosaic) would now be free, forcing Netscape to abandon charging for their product. I was angered at once because Microsoft used its monopoly position in operating systems and ability to "write off" development costs to so obviously subvert a competitor with a superior product.

As a result, Netscape could not maintain market share and eventually was sold.

Am I and countless other developers to infer from the apparent "slap-on-the-wrist" settlement that Microsoft merrily may continue to operate in this fashion in the future, depriving us of remuneration for our development efforts? I've read that DOS, Excel, Word, Internet Explorer, Outlook Express and other Microsoft products were all developed not at Microsoft, but by independent developers. It is clear to me that Microsoft is not an innovator but an exploiter.

To my mind, the best remedy going forward is something akin to two children sharing a piece of cake: one cuts and the other chooses. In a timely fashion, Microsoft should choose which business it wants to be in: operating system software or application software, and then divest themselves of the business not chosen.

Sincerely,
Robert Maxwell Case